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TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [CPAS](#) [ASEC](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: Half of Bosnian Au-pairs remain in America

11. [Summary] Sarajevo FPU recently completed a validation study for all J1 au-pair cases Post issued in 2006. Nearly half of the program participants from Bosnia found legal ways to stay in the USA. [End Summary]

12. Methodology: FPU examined cases from 2006 to provide ample time for return to Bosnia. Of Post's 228 cases in this study, only five were male. Our FPU unit primarily made telephone calls to the au-pairs' homes, but also made some visits to the houses of several applicants in the cities of Sarajevo, Tuzla and Banja Luka. SEVIS checks, as well as ADIS reports were also used as needed in the study.

13. Findings: Of the 228 issuances, 108(47.5%) of the participants stayed in America, 118 (51.6%) returned to Bosnia, and two visa recipients did not travel at all. Of those that remained in the U.S., 58 (25.5%) are now F1 students, 32 (14%) were married and received LPR status, while for 12 (5.3%), FPU could not determine any clear status. We believe these individuals are probably illegally in the U.S. An additional four applicants had pending applications requesting student status and two applicants had pending cases for visa extensions.

14. Of the returnees, 55 (24.1%) returned after finishing their original one year stay, 26 (11.4%) returned after two years (they extended Au- pair status in America for an additional one year), 15 (6.6%) returned after spending between one and two years (the majority closer to two years), 16(7%) returned after staying less than a year, while 4(1.8%) came back to Bosnia after having overstayed.

15. Most of the participants in Bosnia were from the Federation (70%), 29% were from Republic of Srpska and 1% from the Brcko District. There were few applicants from the Herzegovina region in the Federation, or from cities other than Banja-Luka and Doboje in the Republika Srpska.

16. (Comment)Post is aware that the total number of Au-pairs issued in Sarajevo is modest compared with other posts in the region. However, the surprisingly high percentage of those remaining in the US raises some concerns. Are local agencies coaching and advising individuals that the Au-pair program is a way to indirectly receive immigration benefits and circumvent likely ineligibilities as visitors? Furthermore, a very high percentage of the Au pairs who became students are receiving support from their former host families. Many of these students may be working unofficially, long after their Au-pair status has expired. Finally, are these dismal

return rates (even though the vast majority are legally present in the USA) a natural function of an age group that is likely to study and marry, or is the spirit of the au-pair program being breached?  
(End Comment)

[¶](#)7. Our consular officers will continue to monitor these concerns. We plan to follow these trends in future validation studies.

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